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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

BY

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WOODCUTS IN COLOR BY

GUSTAVE BAUMANN

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

by JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS CUT ON WOOD AND PRINTED IN COLORS by GUSTAVE BAUMANN

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To
JOHN DAVIS

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

January

Bleak January! Cold as fate,
And ever colder-ever keener-
Our very hair cut while we wait
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:
Cold as a miser's buried gold,
Or nether-deeps of old tradition—
Jeems January! you're a cold
Proposition!

February

You, February,—seem to be
Old January's understudy,
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—
With wind too moist and snow too muddy—
You overfreeze and overthaw—
Your "Hos'ler Jo"-like recitation
But hints that you're at best, a raw
Imitation.

March

And, March, you've got no friends to spare—
Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-dealers,
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where
The piper's paid—above all spielers;
You are a month, too, of complex
Perversities beyond solution—
A sorto' "loveliest of your sex"
Institution!

April

But, April when you kindo' come
A-sa'nterin down along our roadway,
The bars is down, and we're at home,
And you're as welcome as a show-day!
First thing we know, the sunshine falls
Spring-like, and drenches all Creation
With that-ere ba'm the poets calls
"Inspiration."

May

And May! – It's warmin' jest to see
The crick thawed clear ag'in and dancin' –
Pear-like it's tickled 'most as *me*
A-prancin' 'crosst it with my pants on!
And then to hear the bluebird whet
His old song up and lance it through you,
Clean through the boy's heart beatin' yet –
Hallylooya!

June—'Ll, I jest git *doped* on June!—
The trees and grass all at their greenest—
The round earth swung 'twixt sun and moon,
Jest at its—so to say—serenest:—
In country,—stars and whipperwills;
In town,—all night the boys invadin'
Leadin' citizens' winder-sills,
Sair-a-nadin'.

Fish still a-bitin'-*some*; but 'most
Too hot fer anything but layin'
Jest do-less like, and watchin' clost
The treetops and the squirrels playin'-
Their tail-tips switched 'bove knot and limb,
But keepin' most in sequestration-
Leavin' a big part to the im-
Magination.

August

Now when it's August – I can tell
It by a hunderd signs and over;–
They is a mixed ripe-apple-smell
And mashed-down grass and musty clover;
Bees is as lazy 'most as me –
Bee-bird eats 'em – gap's his wings out
So lazy 'at I don't think he
Spits their stings out!

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September

September, you appeal to all,
Both young and old, lordly and lowly;
You stuff the hay-mow, trough and stall,
Till horse and cow's as roly-poly
As pigs is, slopped on buttermilk
And brand, shipstuff and 'tater-peelin's-
And folks, too, feelin' fine as silk
With all their feelin's!

October

If I'd ben asked for my advice,
And thought the thing out, calm and sober,-
Sizin' the months all once or twice-
I'd lainch'd the year out with *October*...
All Nature then jest veiled and dressed
In weddin' gyarments, ornamented
With ripe-fruit-gems-and kissin' jest
New-invented!

November

I'm feared November's hopes is few
And far between!–Cold as a Monday-
Washday, er a lodge-man who
You'got to pallbear for on Sunday;
Colder and colder every day–
The fixed official time for sighin',–
A sinkin' state you jest can't stay
In, or *die* in!

December

December - why, of course we grin
And bear it - shiverin' every minute,
Yet warm from time the month rolls in
Till it skites out with Christmas in it;
And so, for all its coldest truths
And chill, goose-pimpled imperfections,
It wads our lank old socks with Youth's
Recollections.

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